

## THE HOME CIRCLE

### Poe's Cottage at Fordham.\*

Here lived the soul enchanted  
By melody of song;  
Here dwelt the spirit haunted  
By a demoniac throng;  
Here sang the lips elated;  
Here grief and death were sated;  
Here loved and here unmated  
Was he, so frail, so strong.

Here wintry winds and cheerless  
The dying firelight blew  
While he whose song was peerless  
Dreamed the drear midnight  
through,  
And from dull embers chilling  
Crept shadows darkly filling  
The silent place, and thrilling  
His fancy as they grew.

Here, with brow bared to heaven,  
In starry night he stood,  
With the lost star of seven  
Feeling sad brotherhood.  
Here in the sobbing showers  
Of dark autumnal hours  
He heard suspected powers  
Shriek through the stormy wood.

From visions of Apollo  
And of Astarte's bliss,  
He gazed into the hollow  
And hopeless vale of Dis;  
And though earth were surrounded  
By heaven, it still was mounded  
With graves. His soul had sounded  
The dolorous abyss.

Proud, mad, but not defiant,  
He touched at heaven and hell.  
Fate found a rare soul pliant  
And rung her changes well.  
Alternately his lyre,  
Stranded with strings of fire,  
Led earth's most happy choir  
Or flashed with Israfel.

No singer of old story  
Luting accustomed lays,  
No harper for new glory,  
No mendicant for praise,  
He struck high chords and splendid,  
Wherein were fiercely blended  
Tones that unfinished ended  
With his unfinished days.

Here through this lowly portal,  
Made sacred by his name,  
Unheralded immortal  
The mortal went and came  
And fate that then denied him,  
And envy that decried him,  
And malice that belied him,  
Have cenotaphed his fame.  
—John Henry Boner ("Boner's Lyrics.")

### Her Way.

The six-year-old daughter of a certain naval officer was unconsciously ludicrous the other day. The child was sewing, when her older sister asked: "Why don't you use a pattern?" The little miss replied with a dignity greater than her knowledge: "I don't need a pattern. I sew by ear."—The Pilgrim.

The statement that Mrs. Jay, the wife of the Buncombe County doctor who murdered his three children after chasing her from home, was not quite fifteen years old when she was married seven years ago, is another argument against child marriages. Twenty-two years old, the mother of three children, all murdered by their father, and her husband on the way to the gallows!—Charlotte Observer.

### Rural Improvement Societies.

In the towns and cities all over the United States great interest is being manifested in civic improvement. Civic Leagues, Civic Improvement Clubs, and other associations looking to the beautifying and improving of the towns are being formed and enthusiastic men and women are pushing forward plans to improve the beauty and healthfulness of their towns or cities as the case may be. There is no reason why this progressive movement should stop at the corporate limits of any town; it should be continued to every home, hamlet and country school or church yard. These last are in most country neighborhoods a most pathetic sight. As the old adage so oft quoted teaches that, "Charity begins at home," it would be well to inaugurate the fight against ugliness and the lack of hygienic surroundings at home. Clean up, straighten up, or rebuild broken down fences, plant trees in bare yards and horse lots, plant flowers and vines around the house, repaint and reglaze, pulling out of the broken windows the dilapidated old hats and melancholy, tattered suits of old clothes, discolored by rain and sun.

When this is done, put down graveled walks to the gate, the barn and other places, where business calls you in rainy or dry weather, to keep the mud off the house-wife's floors, saving her much labor.

The school house should by all means share in the general clean up and improvements. Too often this is a most forbidding and forsaken looking place, with a weather-beaten house set upon a bare hill-top where its ugliness cannot be hid. The teacher might take up the subject of improving such unfortunate surroundings and interest the children in planting shade trees, hardy shrubs and flowers around the building. Many of the school houses we have noticed have not even a wire fence to protect them from the visits of cattle and hogs to destroy whatever might be planted. He or she might organize a school grounds improvement society, the object of which would be to make the surroundings attractive. Almost without exception the pupils would enter into such a plan with enthusiasm, and if funds are needed to buy fencing, entertainments might be given by the members for this purpose, which we are sure the citizens of any neighborhood would patronize liberally, and the desert around would be made "to blossom as the rose," and with the roses. This to our mind would be an ideal setting for an ideal school. Such conditions are not beyond the possibility of accomplishment. There are in this, and in other States, hundreds of neglected school houses and grounds susceptible of a high degree of improvement, if but the teachers and pupils would enter upon a crusade to reclaim them from desolation and ugliness. Children would naturally learn to admire and to cherish neatness, order and beauty, to which would be added happy

memories in after years of their school days and of the school house in its frame work of green shade trees and gay blossoms.

A visit to most country churchyards will give one a feeling of loneliness and utter hopelessness because of the neglect everywhere apparent. Tall weeds hiding from view the narrow mounds, even the tomb-stones, few trees and shrubs, and fewer flowers, all speak plainly of lack of attention. We remember that water is sometimes scarce and that those who have loved ones buried here live miles away, perhaps States intervene, but this is the point: If there was an improvement league in the neighborhood, these lonely graves would not appear so lonely and neglected; the weeds would be cut, hardy trees planted, and the mounds be neatly shapen, whether their friends were near by or far away. It is a duty, and should be a pleasure to keep the resting places of our dead decently, as becomes a Christian people; nothing speaks more plainly of the character of individuals or communities, than the attention or lack of attention given their burial grounds.

The season for planting shade trees and hardy shrubs is with us; any kind of trees and shrubs can be used, hundreds that may be found in the woods are just as ornamental and desirable as those selected from a nurseryman's catalogue, and may be had for the digging.

Another matter of which we are reminded and which we have mentioned before, which people who live away from town would find of great benefit and convenience, is the telephone. Having recently known of an instance where great suffering might have been avoided, we are made to realize the great necessity for them in the home, cut off from quick communication, where help is urgently needed. Telephones are becoming very common, even in some rural districts, and the more they are used, the greater their appreciation. The free use of telephones would make farm life more attractive and they may be maintained at a low cost making possible for persons in moderate circumstances to enjoy the pleasure and benefits to be derived from their use.—Mrs. S. E. Buchanan in Texas Farm and Ranch.

### An Impudent Endorsement.

An old Washington gentleman tells a story which he overheard President Lincoln repeat, and which he believes has not been published.

During one of his busy reception hours, when the President was talking first to one, then to another of the many who filled the room in the White House, a gentleman asked if any news had been received from John Morgan, whose Confederate cavalry were raiding Kentucky and Ohio.

"We'll catch John some of these days," replied Lincoln. "I admire him, for he is a bold operator. He always goes after the mail-trains in order to get information from Washington. On his last raid he opened

some mail-bags, and took possession of the official correspondence.

"One letter was from the War Department to a lieutenant in Grant's army; it contained a captain's commission for him. Right under the signature of A. Lincoln the audacious Morgan wrote: 'Approved, John Morgan,' and sent the commission on its way. So there is one officer in our army whose commission bears my signature with the approval of that dare-deveil rebel leader."—Youth's Companion.

### The Duty of Parents.

Duty to children is not summed up in feeding, clothing and sending to a better or worse—at present usually worse—school. The parents' duty begins long before. It is as necessary that we should live healthfully and happily before our children are born, as that we should clothe them afterward. Only by being in the best condition ourselves can we give the proper heritage to a child. To bring a being into the world and handicap him by your own follies and negligences is a poor trick; and yet it is just the trick that nine-tenths of the parents play on their offspring. Treat your child at least as well as you would a fellowman, and be thoughtful of his future. Then, having once given him the good heritage, see to it that his home life shall be such that his mental and moral nature may be rightly developed. Sick or weakly children will in their turn produce weaklings; halting, cowardly natures will have children who are dwarfed in the same way; and instead of the race being helped by these, its general average will be lowered. Consider, then, your duty to your children through yourself. Live in youth and manhood the sanest, cheerfulest and fullest life, and make your home reflect these virtues. So shall your children be in truth the gift of God, and you can say with the psalmist, "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them."—October Woman's Home Companion.

### An Impartial Umpire.

R. B. Hawley, the Texas Republican who came to Congress from that rock-ribbed Democratic State, now has two big sugar plantations in Cuba.

"The Cubans are a suave and diplomatic people," said Mr. Hawley. "They remind me of a story my grandfather used to tell about Martin Van Buren. That distinguished statesman would never express an opinion on anything. One day, in Washington, a man made with a friend a wager that it was possible to get an affirmation out of Van Buren.

"The man who took the affirmative went to Van Buren. 'Mr. President,' he said, 'two men of my acquaintance have made a wager. A bets B that the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. B bets that it does not. Which is right?'

"President Van Buren didn't hesitate a moment. 'It is commonly accepted that Mr. A has the rights of the case,' he said, 'but I shall be glad to hear any arguments Mr. B has to advance in support of his position.'"

\* This is No. 1 of a series of Twenty-five North Carolina Poems selected especially for The Progressive Farmer by the Editor.